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MOUNTAIN AND STREAM SONGS OF THE VIRGINIAS

By HOWARD AGASSIZ MURRILL

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MOUNTAIN AND STREAM SONGS OF THE VIRGINIAS

HOWARD AGASSIZ MURRILL

MOUNTAIN AND STREAM SONGS OF THE VIRGINIAS

By HOWARD AGASSIZ MURRILL

When thou commandest me to sing,
It seems that my heart would break
with pride.

. . . . . .

I know that only as a singer I come be-
fore thy presence.

. . . . . .

I know not how thou singest, my master!
I ever listen in silent amazement.

—*Tagore.*

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HOWARD AGASSIZ MURRILL

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To

ELIZABETH

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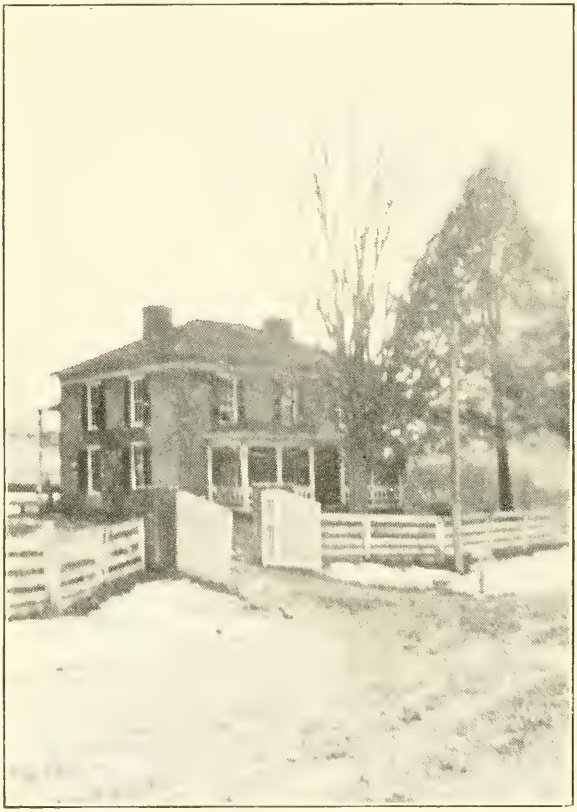

LLANGOLDEN

TO RAMBLERS.

If these mountain lays and legends
That I in lisping sing
Can help you find the winsome land
And to you music bring,

Or lead you to clear fountains
'Neath fern-clad bowlders piled,
Or bring you to arbutus clumps
On mountain crags so wild,

Or make your stars shine brighter,
Or arch rainbows o'er your sea,
Or help you love these mountains—
Full joyous shall I be.

THE PIPE O'ER THE GALE.

THERE'S a home in the highlands where the blue heather grows
And the hemlocks bend over the burn;
There the eyes of a lassie look out o'er the loch
For her laddie's light skiff to return.

O the waves on the loch and the clouds on the hill,
Driving dark where the birches bend low!
With the wind and the billow those bright eyes grow dim,
And a heart is now cumbered with woe.

But the scream of a bagpipe is deafening the gale,
Rising high by the crag's rugged form,
And a brave hand is bending his sail to the foam—
He is safe; he's at home through the storm!

THE CREEKS OF CRAIG.

Over the cavern's cooling brim,
Out by the bowlder's mossy rim,
Down by the ferns and rocks so grim
  Pour the creeks of Craig.

Down from the mountain's shattered side,
Through the gorge where the shades abide,
Into the valleys fair and wide
  Stream the creeks of Craig.

There's a cottage white as snow,
Round it hemlocks bending low
And a spring whose waters flow
  Into the creeks of Craig.

Owner of that home and shore,
Learned in Nature's happy lore,
Stands a youth with hand on oar,
  By the creeks of Craig.

He will never a townsman be,
Run the road or sail the sea;
But with maiden full of glee
  Will dwell by the creeks of Craig.

There's a girl both sweet and fair,
With a wild rose in her hair,
Standing in her gateway there,
Across the creeks of Craig.

After two more days are come,
Through the ripple or the foam
He will bring his girl bride home
Over the creeks of Craig.

THE FLYER.

He flies in the face of fate
  Where the golden sunbeams dance,
With the light of youth on his brow,
  O'er the shell-torn terrain of France.

He sails where the "seventy-sevens"
  Growl back to the "Bertha's" roar;
He wheels past the air gun's shaft
  To turn the Vokker o'er.

He signals the range to Haig,
  High over the Teuton line,
And wars with their flyers brave
  For the castled rocks of the Rhine.

He flies above the clouds
  In the pure white light of God;
And what if he falls and sleeps
  Where the lilies bloom from the sod?

And what if he comes when peace
  Blows over the war sky's rim?
The snow-white hands will twine;
  We'll all wreathe the laurel for him!

THE DREAMY MILLER.

The stream is flowing,
My mill wheel is going,
And the spray keeps a-dashing on the fern;
My boat is launched, and the wheat is growing,
And the millboy is bringing his turn.

Why rack my brain
For the soldiers slain
In Spanish wars so stern?
For die we must; but live who can,
While the millboy is bringing his turn.

All must sleep
Like the waters deep
In the sea, the grave, or an urn;
But my years shall pass like the mill wheel's go,
While the millboy brings in his turn.

MUTATION.

A FLECKING day and a dying night,
And a day and night of pain;
A failing beam and a dying light,
And a day and night again.

And this is known as mortal life;
To mortals it is given—
The only life this side the grave
Or life this side of heaven.

The sun rolls up, and the moon goes down;
Æolus sounds his horn;
The stars and moon they pale again;
Day breaks, and then 'tis morn.

A gushing fount and a gurgling rill,
A merry woodland stream,
A mighty river flowing on
To a sea of emerald green.

A tiny babe with a smiling face,
A youth with a bearing brave,
A man of years with locks of snow
Strides onward to the grave.

Thus generations come and go,
  And kingdoms rise and fall.
Man lives and breathes and then returns;
  Oblivion curtains all.

So sighs that being formed of dust,
  Till from empyrean dome
There gently falls the Father's voice:
  "O mortal, this your home!"

OUR OLD ARMCHAIR.

On our porch, by the door,
In the flecking of the sun,
Where the shine and the shade
In their airy courses run,
Stands a chair, worn and old
By the years it has known
And the prints of wrinkled hands
Now folded and gone.

Did the crows then call,
As they do this summer day,
Over rustling Indian corn,
Over fields of fragrant hay?
Did the plover then cry?
Did the goldenrod wave,
As now on the hill,
Near our ancestor's grave?

In your lap when new
Great-grandfather sat,
On veranda floor
His cane and hat;
The slaves afield
With scythe and song;
But those good old days
Could not last long.

For an Indian yell
  And a bended bow,
A flag of France
  In the hands of a foe,
The stockade stormed,
  His dwelling burned.
The nights were long
  Till peace returned.

Through war and death
  And war again,
When slaves are freed
  And masters slain,
Old homes are sold
  And children gone—
Through all these years,
  Old chair, you've come.

May no rude hand
  Forget your past!
As an heirloom fond
  Long may you last!
May your rounds be not weak,
  Nor your old arms riven,
For those you've held
  And the rest you've given!

BONNIE FIELDS OF RYE.

Our pasture lands I love to see,
With grass blue like the sky;
But my heart leads up the slope
To the waving fields of rye.

The valleys and the wheat agree,
The languid winds there sigh;
But on the hills the breezes sweep
Through billowy banks of rye.

Fair stands the green and rustling corn,
So stately and so high;
But fairer yet on highland hills
Bend her bonnie fields of rye.

There is no sight that will compare—
You may seek until you die—
There is no sight that can compare
With the highland fields of rye.

A LEGEND OF THE FALLS, NEWCASTLE.

O SPARKLING daughter of the deep,
  Why run as a torrent wild?
Why rush and roar and madly dash
  And moan like a dying child?

"O friend, draw near in the twilight time
  And stand by the waterfall.
I'll tell thee part of the story now,
  But never can tell thee all.

My sire, Old Ocean, long ago
  Laid earth's foundations deep;
Beneath the dark blue waves he toiled,
  Nor ever fell asleep.

Some restive spirit from beneath
  Upheaved his palace floor
And robbed him of his labors long,
  To vex him evermore.

'Go forth,' he said, 'O daughter fair;
  Go forth upon the land,
And bring me back my crystals white
  And every grain of sand!'

I was my father's loving child;
His halls had cherished me.
'Twas said no fairer nymph e'er dwelt
Within the deep blue sea.

I laid aside my glowing gems,
My jewels rich and rare,
My coronet of pearls laid by,
And sought the upper air.

A gown of snow-white cloud I wore,
A sunbeam in my hair,
And waved farewell; but there fell down
Full many a parting tear.

I made my home in the mountains high,
Far from the ocean's roar;
I rip through rocks, I tear through crags
To reach the far-off shore.

I toil alway, by day, by night,
To take the grains with me;
They cry, like a sailor far from shore:
'To sea! to sea! to sea!'

But O, there are many barriers piled,
And the way is ever long!
So you hear but the roar as I hurry on
And seldom a joyous song.

My sire will labor through ages long
To regain his regal sway,
And I will toil till the bright stars fall
Or the mountains wear away.

For back to the sea each grain shall go,
Of sand and the crystals white,
And I shall dwell in my father's halls.
My stranger friend, good night!"

NO STARLIT EYES AT EVEN.

While the foliage now is turning
And low zephyrs lightly breathe,
Where the goldenrod is blowing
And the pine trees sigh and grieve,

Let thy thoughts some moment wander
To the murmuring Shenandoah,
To the far-off hills of sunset—
There the sunlight falls no more.

There no starlight in its gleaming
Peers into the soul at even;
Only there the silent sentries
Stand to guard the gates of heaven.

LAMPS OF GOLD.

Who walks with bright and shining feet
  Amid the lamps of gold?
Who holds seven stars in his right hand
  With princely bearing bold?

Whose voice is wilder than the seas?
  Who hears our high desire?
Who calls to earth, "I know thy works"?
  Whose eyes a flaming fire?

'Tis our Redeemer glorified;
  Our blessed Lord, 'tis he.
Those feet that now touch streets of gold
  Once bled by Galilee.

That face now bright as noonday sun
  Was full of grief and fears;
Those radiant eyes with heaven's light
  Oft streamed with burning tears.

The heavens that near the island rolled,
  By the Beloved seen,
Are passing ever near us still,
  But clouds have come between.

That pall that dark and high up hangs,
That veil of mystery,
Shall by strong angel hands be rent,
And we those wonders see.

But while on earth by faith we walk,
Our steps are firm and bold;
For we hear the fall of the shining feet
Amid the lamps of gold.

THE FOUR-LEAF CLOVERS.

When at early morn in the dew-wet fields
The shine and glow of the dewdrop yields
Its glory and glimmer to bloom and tree,
A four-leaf clover looks up at me.

When the burning sun in his strength shines down
And scorches the grass till the fields turn brown,
I seek the shade of the sugar tree,
And a four-leaf clover peeps out at me.

When I walk in the fields at eventide,
Where the flowers bloom on every side
And the grasses wave like a rippling sea,
The four-leaf clovers bend to me.

And on through the day till nightfall dark,
When each star shines out like a firefly's spark,
And the bird song is stilled in the hemlock tree,
My four-leaf clovers bow to me.

Life is sweet where the clovers grow;
Here not a string of her harp sounds woe;
Goodness and mercy on every side
In the land of the clovers ever abide.

ONLY A PICTURE.

Only a picture now fading,
Grown dimmer year by year—
The face of a flower lover,
Who has left the valleys here.

The wild flowers bloom without her;
The wood birds muffle their tone;
The cedar it grieves about her—
All wonder where she has gone.

But the evening land knows the secret
The west wind bears to the tree,
And the birds heard the cedars grieving;
They sang the dirge to me.

No pain after death finds the pure,
And the flowers know never a pain;
So I'll strew her grave in the springtime,
When the wild flowers bloom again.

She has left the violet valley,
She has left the arbutus wild,
And the hanging boughs of the hawthorn,
Where she blew the blossoms and smiled.

She has left a fountain broken,
Whose flow shall never cease
Until sealed in the far forever
By Him who giveth peace.

Only a fading picture,
Deep in the dark of my trunk;
But down to that gloomy quarter
My crescent spirit has sunk.

I have found in this world of changing
A chill of lifeblood cold,
A seldom rush of the spirit,
A seldom flow of the soul.

There's a likeness of earth to heaven,
And a like in the treasures they hold.
The cloud of a morning sadness
May glow with a rim of gold.

A NIGHT STORM.

'Tis the wildest storm of winter
That the mountains ever heard;
One can see the night clouds flying,
Hear the night wind's every word.

'Twixt the hilltop and high heaven
Hang the ice moon's arctic beams,
While a crystallizing spirit
Is at work on all the streams.

O, there's life in stern old winter,
Tingling blood in highest gale,
On the blast determination,
Courage clad in coat of mail.

Strange that mortal life of joy,
Where there falleth not a tear;
Sails without an adverse current
Find not sea room anywhere.

When earth's nations' wars and tumults
Rock and lull themselves to sleep,
And a great eternal silence
Reigns along the waveless deep;

When there comes no clash of commerce,
In the state no social strife,
At the bar no theft nor murder,
In the marts no din of life;

When, again, the poles are tropics,
Mountains leveled all to plains,
And the storm god's diapasons
Melt to tones of soft refrains—

Then this mortal life is over,
And our day beneath the sun,
Rolling through the deeps of twilight,
Finds another day begun.

Richest cargoes, home-bound treasures,
By the gale runs harborward;
Through earth's life storms fleeter-footed
Goes man's spirit back to God.

THE PLOWMAN.

Day by day we live and breathe,
And our duties fill the time;
Day by day we plow the fields,
Seeing not the heavens sublime.

In the furrow underneath us,
Centered in the tear-wet ground,
Fixed, our silent gaze is held there,
While we plow our round by round.

Up above us floats a richness
That no artist's brush can reach;
Down upon us shower the sunbeams
That can golden lessons teach.

But the shine we change to shadow,
And the glorious forms that rise
Never seem one-half so precious
As the clods beneath our eyes.

Earth from earth in truth descended
Through the mist of long ago;
Earth with earth we now are blended;
Earth in earth is soon laid low.

But the winds they blow forever,
And the stars forever shine,
While the blue waves roll unceasing
To an ancient ocean rhyme.

Man moves on and plows his furrow,
Round by round his land grows less,
And 'mong upturned bones and ashes
Finds at last a couch and rest.

Plowing, plowing, life forgetting,
Seldom glancing to the skies;
Plowing, plowing, eyes in furrow;
Plowing, plowing till he dies.

THE OLD FORT.

On the Allegheny's summit
Stands an ancient barricade,
Far beneath the Greenbrier flowing,
Interweaving light and shade.

Vines are clambering o'er this fortress,
Binding there its moss and mold,
With their tendrils firm and slender
Clinging in the crannies old.

In the fields beyond the highway,
Where now blooms the goldenrod,
There are ruins of glowing camp fires
And mounds of silent sod.

Here the youths of old plantations,
With a bearing lofty, bold,
Marched from sunny homes in Georgia
To withstand the snow and cold.

Their rich dwellings, rare and regal,
Where the sweet magnolias blow,
They have left to face the winter
And a fearful Northern foe.

Those rude huts upon the mountains,
Whose rough chimneys fall away,
Sheltered boys from sunny Georgia,
Noble youths who wore the gray.

When the Northern soldiers yielded
And the Southrons bivouacked there,
Shouts of triumph, notes of vict'ry
Rent the frozen wintry air.

And the Highland lads were greeted,
Marching to their drums,
And the Southern youths were welcomed
To happy Highland homes.

There were gathered merry maidens
With hair of sunny hue,
Whose glancing eyes were tear-dimmed
When the soldiers waved adieu.

Those Southern boys, now old,
Wear scars for battle stains;
Their huts are all in ruins,
Yet the battle field remains.

On the Allegheny's summit
Linger memories of a day
When the barricade was held
By Georgia boys in gray.

SHANNONDALE.

Long at youth's open gateway I stood dreaming;
The noiseless years stole ever by unconsciously;
Lost was the gentle music of their passing,
Lost in the din of life and stern activity.

My dream was of a land whose unchecked rivers,
Disturbed not by the puffing steamers blowing,
Where stately swan and heron slept at evening,
Upon her mirrored bosom ever seaward flowing.

Far the wild wings of imagination
Bore me to some strange land where palm leaves quiver,
Where the citron blows and fountains, trembling
To the strand, murmur legends old and echo sounds forever.

But not on Persian slopes or in fair Tuscany
My burning soul did find her rest in solitude;
For here at night earth's early children trode
Midst fanes invisible in their weird spirit mood.

Open wide was flung life's eastern gateway,
Vanished ideal visions, morning dreams;
And now 'tis real, yet 'tis all enchanted—
How fair and sweet a realized ideal seems!

Walled by purple mountains strewn with bowlders,
Holding thus invention still at bay,
Washed by the waves of a river flowing gently,
Jealous ever of progression's active sway.

O, here may nature's child find sweetest sympathy,
When thoughts would upward soar to heights illimitable!
Aloft they are by western breezes swiftly fanned,
And clouds are rift to make the stars attainable.

But when the freighted soul seems friend-forsaken
And longs for cradle-crooning time again,
The moaning pine weeps a low lullaby,
And falling water bears away its pain.

O Nature's cherished land, of all the dearest,
For careworn brows a land as fair as Cashmere's vale,
Long held by ancient chiefs of Shannon!
The paleface dreamer calls it Shannondale.

LIFE'S FOREST.

Lone is the way, love, lone is the way,
Far through the wide life forest
We call earth, trackless save where
A former footman falls or miry lands
Down to degradation draw the forgetful.

Leaves change and die, love, leaves change and die;
So plans, dreams, and visions
Are but leaves that ever strew
Our untrod way to pave it soundless here,
Trackless, and to hold its everlasting mystery.

A BROAD CREEK GRAVE.

Music trembled from the ballroom,
  Lamplights streamed upon the sail
Of a boat that lay at anchor,
  And a hand was on the rail—

Just the warm hand of a boy
  Who was slighted at the ball;
Here he stood alone and silent,
  While the dance swayed in the hall.

As the boy, refused and ruffled,
  Left the maid, who smiled in scorn,
Said he as he passed the doorway:
  "A pity she were not better born."

Up the gangway of the vessel
  Stalked her brother, tall and grim.
"You are challenged; choose your weapons,"
  And the boy looked up at him.

Down upon the shore at morning
  Stood a broken-hearted man,
Watched a boat grow small and smaller
  Toward the far Virginia land.

Then he called out o'er the water:
"If my boy in duel is slain,
Fly a white flag by the river,
And I'll send across for him."

A sound of shots came o'er the river.
"O my heart, my boy is slain!"
Down upon the shore he faltered,
From his eyes tears fell like rain.

Slowly rowed the boatman over
To where he saw the white flag wave,
And brought back the boy's pale body.
"Let's see, Mister; here's his grave."

Cursèd be the dark duello,
With its horrid death and strife!
Welcome law and right and kindness,
With its high regard for life!

CHRISTMAS TIME.

Tell me why one day in the winter
Is glad when the winds are severe,
When ice will stick like a splinter,
And it's the coldest day in the year.

Tell me why, when dead leaves are blowing
And nowhere a flower or bloom,
And it keeps on snowing and snowing,
Why children laugh in the room,

And men go whistling and singing,
Even mother's reading a rhyme;
Sleigh bells and church bells ringing.
'Tis because it's Christmas time!

The Child worshiped oft so blindly
Brought this holiday long ago;
And I shall think of Him kindly
In the midst of the winter and snow.

THE PINES.

THERE'S a sweet retreat in old Highland,
As cool as a tangle of vines;
It is shadowed by branches luxuriant,
And is called by lovers "The Pines."

In daylight the sunbeams are softened
When crossing the shadows between,
And by night the moonlight is mellowed
Till it sometimes can scarcely be seen.

In winter the feathery snowflake
And the starlight keen and clear,
They fall like a dream on that woodland
Through the crisp December air.

The autumn has nooks there and corners,
With walls all scarlet and gold;
Her incense arises to heaven
And in glory descends on the wold.

The springtime on violet carpet,
In velvet-sandaled feet,
Rejoices in the fragrance of garlands
And revels in bird songs sweet.

But the snow nor the scarlet nor springtime,
With all their treasures rare,
Can ever surpass June's beauty,
Nor the pines that grow towering there.

'Tis in June here that maidens assemble
Beneath the soft summer sky,
Reflecting the heaven-deep azure
In the splendor and grace of the eye.

And there by the falling waters,
That ripple cool and clear,
Sing the song of life to your true love
Or whisper it in her ear.

These haunts, like the bowers of Eden,
Were twined for the home of the dove;
'Tis here that the youths and the maidens
First learn their lispings of love.

There's a sweet retreat in old Highland,
As cool as a tangle of vines;
It is shadowed by branches luxuriant,
And is called by lovers "The Pines."

AHOY!

Love sprung in heaven is not earth-born,
Nor subject to the world's hard laws;
This shadow land, this sphere of gloom,
Does not hold sway beyond the tomb,
Nor conquers true love here.

I stood beneath the hemlock shade,
I turned and walked the ways of men;
That solitude, that place so sweet,
This way so lone, these hurrying feet
Would sound the sad footfall of fate.

I dreamed I saw the direst shapes
That e'er on earth had been before.
Up from the pit, from out the abyss,
To conquer love, to baffle bliss,
Those frenzied legions thronged.

But ears can stand the thunderstorm
That gathers on Plutonian shores;
And hearts of love are hearts so brave,
Their only shrine their only grave
They seek in promise true.

The clouds have gone from out the sky,
And sunlight glances on the stream.
Now sails are spread; two sails of snow
The zephyrs fan; the breezes blow.
Ahoy! Away! away! away!

OVER THE WATER.

A BONNY skiff as white as snow,
With oars light and true;
A youthful boatman, plying oar,
But the boat was built for two.
Over the merry Shenandoah,
Rowing, rowing, rowing;
Under the wintry starlit sky,
Going, going, going.

With only one aboard the skiff,
Will it not more lightly glide?
Ah! no; a pilot he should have,
A pilot by his side!
Over the rippling waves of blue,
Rowing, rowing, rowing;
Down to the sea her waters go,
Flowing, flowing, flowing.

The boatman ne'er should be alone
If pilots brave are few;
For the sunny skiff may strike a shoal,
And the boat was built for two.
Over the merry stream of life,
Rowing, rowing, rowing;
Under the starlit skies of youth,
Going, going, going.

AN INDIAN SPIRIT.

When the darkness of the evening
Round the mountain lower gathers,
And the west wind down this valley
  Breathes a night song weird and low,
Upward from the rocks I issue,
From my grave among the shadows,
Out among the grassy meadows
  That were forests long ago.

Dost thou ask me still, thou night bird,
Of my many weary journeys,
Of my place among the living
  Now three hundred years agone?
I will answer thee, thou great owl,
By this river flowing gently,
Winding through these fertile lowlands,
  And it shall confirm my song.

All my fathers were forgotten,
Worn by fevers, slain in battle;
Ere I came to recollection,
  Death cut all my ties asunder.
But the young Catawba chieftain
Brought me here into his wigwam,
Gave to me his bow and arrows,
  He the noble Rolling Thunder.

So that Turtle, a papoose
Of the wasted tribe Senedo,
Was a brave with paint and war gear.
  Lightfoot the Catawbas called me,
For I ran with Rolling Thunder;
And 'twas here along this water,
By this purling, happy river,
  That I peeled the towering birch tree;

Made canoes so light and airy
That I could outrow the beaver
Ere I reached my fifteenth summer.
  In the early moon of flowers,
When the tribes had smoked the willow,
Down the bright Wappatomaka
To the blue Cohongoruton,
  Underneath wild blooming bowers,

Ever rowed I, kept a-rowing
Till I saw the mighty cornfields
Of the friendly Tuscaroras.
  Here I found my Indian maiden,
Slender as the trembling aspen;
From her wigwam door I brought her
To the tangled river's margin;
  My canoe was lightly laden.

Here beside this flowing river,
Where the wild duck, swan, and heron
Made their nests along the margin,
Stood my wigwam here and new.
Through this happy forest valley
Hunted, fished we, fought our battles;
In the chase Lightfoot was foremost;
On the war path he was true.

But I saw, deep in the forest,
The strange footprint of the Paleface;
And the Long Knives came so friendly,
Glad and happy drew they nigh,
Bade us drink their fire water,
Made me slay great Rolling Thunder;
Then I fell, thus powwowed, earthward;
Paleface Long Knife made me die.

The Great Spirit came unto me,
Told me that the Islands Blessèd,
Which I had in life so longed for,
Were beyond the purple water.
I had slain my friend and chieftain;
Long might I in vain the boatman
Call, while on the shore rolled thunder,
Voice of the Catawba's father.

So I tell thee, thou grim night bird,
And confirm it, changeless river,
Why I wander, silent, sullen,
O'er the ashes of our fathers;
Through this desolated region,
Once our happy forest valley,
Why I wander, silent, sullen,
By the old Wappatomaka.

When a thousand moons go over,
And no wigwam smoke curls upward
From this mighty land of forests,
Where the deer and bison roam,
Call they from the land of hunting,
From beyond the purple water,
From the Islands of the Blessèd,
Voices call the Indian home.

PURE AS THE SNOW.

O, I KNOW of one who lingers
  Near a gentle river's flow,
One whose face is like a lily,
  One whose heart is pure as snow.

She sees visions rare and radiant,
  Like wild sunset scenes at sea;
Sees beyond the land and water
  Fairer land and bluer sea.

When the world, all worn with day life,
  Seeks a refuge from the light,
Slumbers on its snowy pillows,
  Curtained from the eyes of night;

Ever in the deepest gloaming,
  When the day fades from the wold,
And the last good night is tinkled
  From the weary of the fold—

Through the maples and the roses,
  Through wistaria's moonlight shade,
Through her soul there breathes a murmur
  Of a song the angels made.

O'er fair fields her wild thoughts wander,
On earth's curtains long she dwells;
In the pure she learns the symbol,
Seeks the bloom in shaded dell.

O, she is my river maiden!
I have met her, this I know;
For her face is like the lily,
And her heart is pure as snow.

ADRIFT.

I AM going down the stream,
  A land I'm passing through;
My life is like a dream,
  And time is drifting too.

Out on the wild, lone sea
  A sail shall soon be spread;
A weird, lone bark at sea
  Shall drift among the dead.

Beyond the farthest bend
  Of all eternity—
O, who shall know the end
  Of immortality?

NEW RIVER.

'Twas the springtime of beauty;
Buds, blossoms, and trees
Were bursting all fragrant
To wild humming bees.

And the light wings of summer,
So dreamlike and fair,
Were fanning full tender
The violets there.

From the sad winding river
To blue depths above,
The cliffs, fells, and wildwoods
Were dreaming of love.

Through the varied old forest
Of wide-spreading trees
The sun glow was falling
On soft evening leas.

But more radiant far
And more wondrous fair
Did that sunlight gleam
In luxuriant hair.

That hair decked the brows
  Of two maidens whose eyes
Reflected the azure
  Of twilight's deep skies.

We were seated midst lichens,
  On a huge rugged stone,
While the river beneath
  Flowed solemnly on.

Our hearts knew a sadness
  When lips trembled along
The strange, solemn words
  Of that quaint old song:

"Row, row your boat
  Gently down the stream;
For all that's past is gone, you know—
  The future's but a dream."

TWILIGHT.

This is the twilight time,
The dearest of the day,
When the weary tasks are laid aside,
The books and slates with eager pride
Are packed in the desks away.

And now from school they come,
With hope the bosom swells;
The swiftest sleighs are in a row;
The horses paw the crispy snow;
Away go the jingling bells!

O the days that are gone,
The time of school days dead!
How sad does their clinging memory sweep
Through the changing years of twilight deep,
With all but their sweetness fled!

A DESIRE.

I WOULD tent me on yon mountain,
Far above these misty lowlands;
Up beyond where creep earth's shadows
I would dwell, a mountain spirit.

In these sleepy plains and valleys,
By the drowsy south wind's breathing,
We are lulled to careless slumber,
And we only dream of action.

From the mountain comes a spirit
Seines the lowlands' groves and gardens,
Steals away her fragrant cloudlets,
Draws them back into the mountains.

There the Highland spirits hold them
Till the daylight and the evening
Mingle them their blending colors,
Then they hang them there in glory.

Thus sweet dreams that form like shadows,
Rising through dull, leaden mind domes,
Highland spirits bear them upward,
Where they glow in rainbow beauty.

I would tent me on yon mountain,
Far above these misty lowlands;
Up beyond where creep earth's shadows
I would dwell, a mountain spirit.

HOMEWARD-GOING.

'Tis evening, and the sunset glow
Falls purpling on the hilltops high,
While all along the woodland's rim
Gray clouds hang 'gainst the changing sky.

The tallow moon smiles out a wee
And, smiling, peeps in golden wonder,
While we go rumbling 'long the lanes
As gods of old in cars of thunder.

And as we wind through light and shade,
By cool and rippling streamlets flowing,
We have our mirth and times of glee
With merry maidens homeward-going.

We sip the wine from sun-grown grapes
As sweet as Rhineland's clusters, clearer;
And that these spring from Loudon soil
Makes Loudon soil the dearer.

From fruits to sweets and lunch time meats,
And these to songs and solemn singing;
By dell and woodland, slope and glade,
We stir the silent woods to ringing.

At length the mellow moonlight falls
On old-time homestead bravely standing,
Wherein the cheerful household dwells,
Cupid alone his arrows sending.

The day is done, and nevermore
Shall that glad scene know a returning;
For life glides on, and youth grows old,
To change by heaven's sunset's burning.

A SANGUINE SAIL.

Far down fair evening valleys of the West,
Upon the careless tide of ebbing day,
There drifted onward, southward two white clouds,
Like snowy sails of craft in some lone bay.

And while in floating to that orange land,
Where love and fragrance steal her winter's time,
Love's sunlight fell on them and made them glow
As blooms sun-kissed in their faint tropic clime.

Those tinted clouds, they drifted into one,
That lay in burning gold of living hue;
And all the flaming West was radiant,
A glory filled the fields of twilight blue.

I saw two lives that drifted from the vast
(Those mystic realms of shade where all things sleep);
And when they passed the bar and reached the sea,
A loneliness was theirs along the deep.

But O! when one the trembling signal gave,
And 'twas across the blue in love returned,
Those lives they sweetly drifted each to each;
All o'er the waves a flame transcendent
burned.

And ever as we drift the leaden deep,
If love, our pilot, stands to guide us o'er,
A fragrant breeze our sanguine sails shall fill
And fan us far to summer's golden shore.

THE OLD MAN.

THINGS change so much in a few short years
It's enough to bring to an old man tears.
There's the warm log house where we used to live
Is all torn down. But I must not grieve,
For here I have the best of a home,
On Flurry Street, with my son John;
And everything that suits my eye
That son of mine will send and buy.

But the yard is small, and the rooms so fine,
And a host of friends of John, not mine,
That I feel somehow there's no place for me—
Not a stream, not a barn, nor the shade of a tree.
Through the hours of the day 'tis not so hard,
For I watch the boys go by the yard,
And then I count the passing men.
But O when night comes back again!

Then memories throng this brain of mine:
When I sat by the fire in the olden time
The great pot steamed on the sooty crane,
The red light streamed on the windowpane

And gilded many a ringlet of hair
And sweetened many a face so fair;
The old andirons, so shining bright,
Reflected back the ruddy light.

And joy and laughter and song so sweet
And stories old I can ne'er repeat.
O, alone I think of nights like these
And days that pass like a summer's breeze
And then of mounds in the forest's shade,
Of all the changes that time has made,
Of my hair that is white as the driven snow—
And then, somehow, I long to go.

LIFE IN A SWING.

Sweet it is to live
In this land of ours,
Land of golden sunshine,
Land of fragrant flowers.

I love the life God gives us
In this earth so fair,
Earth so full of gladness,
Earth so free from care.

Towering all around us
Rise the mountains high,
Mountains rising grandly,
Mountains in the sky.

Below us ever rolling
Is the ocean old,
Ocean's age concealing,
Ocean's past untold.

Let us courage take
In our life so free,
Life of partial conflict,
Life of victory.

THE LANDMARK.

At morn I stood on the hillside fresh,
Where the sweet wild roses bloom;
But across the stream and beyond the vale
There arose the stone of a tomb.

The new sun blazed through crags in the east
To light the golden day,
At eve to sink in crimson clouds
And fade into night away.

The diamond dew and columbines
And the wild rose, blooming fair,
Glowed and glistened about my feet
And scented the morning air.

Below the blooms, at the base of the hill,
A murmuring streamlet flows
To turn the wheel of a mountain mill
And to seek the sea's repose.

A home near by, with flowers and song,
Birds twittering in the eaves,
A mother sweet and children fair
Among the flowers and trees.

The waters of that silver stream
Have reached the somber sea;
The columbine on the hillside fair
Now blooms no more for me.

The dew that like the diamond hung
Was drawn to the sky that day,
And the fragrance of the wild rose there
Was borne by the wind away.

That home is now in other hands;
The children fair are gone;
And nothing seems familiar there,
Save on the hill that stone.

While life is plastic, death stands sure,
Like the stone upon that hill,
To mark the pass from life to life
Or life to all that's still.

HILL HOME.

Have you ever been invited
To the white house on the hill
When the winds had ceased their wailing
And the pines were hushed and still?

Have you passed its welcome lintel
From the chilling shades of even
That gather round the mountain
That rises toward heaven?

Have you feasted at that hill home?
Have you tasted of its cheer?
Have you rested there in slumber
Till the morning sun shone clear?

Then you know that hearthstone firelight
Sparkles like the clearest gem,
And that hill home kind of friendship
Glitters like a diadem.

Over in that other country
It is said that friends abide.
Could they be much truer yonder
Than we find them on this side?

If I could live a long forever
With the friends that I hold dear,
I'd almost give my chance for heaven
For the times we'd have down here.

But, ah! the windows slowly darken,
The towering chimneys tumble down;
And where now 'tis joy and laughter
'Twill be field or forest brown.

Yet far up in the glowing sky lands
My heart with joy shall fill
When I greet again my true friends
From the white house on the hill.

TANGLED THREADS.

With troubled look on boyish face,
And all with sobs and sighs,
One hand well hid in chestnut curls,
With wistful, deep brown eyes,

Our darling comes to me to-day
And holds to what he brings.
"Papa, can you untangle this?"—
A bunch of tangled strings.

My cherished task I laid aside
To grant him his request;
A rich reward I felt was mine,
A child with a grateful breast.

O Father in heaven, I bring to thee,
I scarce can lift my head.
Canst thou, O Lord, untangle this
My tangled bunch of thread?

For years I've worked with tangled skeins,
The twists come all again;
I have but trouble for my toil,
For patience only pain.

Take thou my tangled threads of life,
With every knot and break;
Mend me and straighten out again
For Christ the Mender's sake.

OUR PEACE CRY.

High does the tumult of the war
O'erride the silence of the day,
And gory hands and fiery cries
Break o'er the altars where we pray.

In fields of France oft filled with flowers,
Where many peaceful landscapes spread,
There falls the bomb and drops the dart,
And laves the fair fields strewn with dead.

Far on the seas where vessels pass
And friend greets friend as flags are known,
A shot, a shell, a death-filled tube—
The brave go down in wave and foam.

In many a land through all the world
There rages strife and death and war;
Not Bethlehem nor Galilee
Escapes the reeking scimitar.

O Lord, while here in peace we meet
And in security we pray,
Break the strong iron hand of war
And drive the war clouds all away.

Reign thou, O Christ, in all the world
And show to us thy princely worth;
Make now thy conquest all complete
And bring the golden age to earth.

LEGEND OF THE SHENANDOAH.

Have you heard of that strange story,
  Written on the page of time,
Of that cherished whispered legend
  Still the grief of the murmuring pine?

In the days that are forgotten
  Now by those whose locks have turned,
And the sleepers by the willow,
  Those whose lamps of life have burned—

In the days long ere our fathers
  Sailed the wild and wintry sea,
Seeking land and home and country
  And a clime where all are free—

From the dim days of the Indian
  Comes this lonely mystic chime,
Floating, chanting in rhythm broken,
  Wafted down from pine to pine.

By the blue Senedo River,
  By its willow-winding way,
Stood a large, quaint deerskin wigwam
  In the light of that old day—

Here there dwelt an Indian maiden,
With her dark and shining hair,
With a tongue that told of forests
And of river banks so fair.

In canoe she sang her love song,
Dreamed her dreams so sweet and pure
That, forgetful of the river,
Wave and current did her lure.

So one golden autumn evening
When the day was wont to rest
And the sun his course completed,
Glowing, dying in the west,

Lightly, gently down the river,
Borne by magic spell along,
In her bark she swiftly glided,
Trilling fragments of a song.

Forever down the flowing river,
Floating to a distant shore,
Gleamed that sparkling, bright Star Daughter,
She the fairest Shenandoah.

Still flows on the sad, blue river
With the name the maiden gave,
Sigh the pines still all so lonely,
Weep the willows o'er the wave.

FAR AWAY.

Tick, tock; rick, rock;
  Shut eyes is best;
But no little brown head
  To cuddle 'gainst my breast.

Good night, starlight;
  Things begin to blur;
Can't think of anything
  Or any one but her.

Take train in rain;
  Foam, river, foam;
Fly through mountains
  And bring me home.

Night late, reach gate;
  Tired one rest;
Now little brown head
  Is cuddled 'gainst my breast.

WHERE'S HOME?

Home's not the spot where ivy clings,
'Tis not the place where willows wave,
Nor where ancestral ruins grand
Stand towering o'er the brier-grown grave.

Home's where rattling noise is heard
And fiery urchins kick and squeal,
Where hum and bang and laughters shout
Are heard at every evening meal.

But give me home, and home like this;
I love the noises, every one;
They kill my patience, break my thoughts,
But I love them all when far from home.

UNSPOKEN.

The wintry stars through clouds were peeping,
And moonlight on the river lay;
While birds in high fir trees were sleeping,
And water falling far away.

Blue smoke through leaden air was rising
From chimney tops of farmhouse high,
And light through merry windows shining,
Like love light in a maiden's eye.

Look! I see the hall door open.
Hark! I hear a heaving sigh.
It is a deep heart word unspoken,
A word like those that never die!

By the stairs a youth is leaning,
Gallant as a cavalier;
On his life a hope is gleaming,
In his eye a question tear.

By his side a maiden standing,
Fair as those in Orient clime,
Now responsive, now relenting,
Probing intents of his mind.

Look! Another hall door opens,
All is silent, stillness reigns;
And the mystic spell is broken,
Hope her rippling fountain drains.

In this life full many a murmur
Falls half uttered on the air,
As the blooms in lands of summer
Fall half open everywhere.

A RETURNING.

How strange are days that fade away
And years that bring them back again,
Where memory fans the feathery sleep
From off the eyelids, dark and deep,
Below a brow of pain!

There are no songs that have been sung,
No blooms have fallen on the sod,
No zephyrs breathed so low and sweet,
No soft footfalls of infant feet,
But turn us to our God.

I left the home so dear to me;
And onward, with my hopes unfurled,
I passed alone to stranger lands,
Through forests old, by mountain strands,
A wanderer in the world.

When forest paths have fairer grown
And sweet arbutus scents the lea,
When south winds burst the fragrant flowers,
Then memory's gone, and golden hours
Drift through the dim to me.

THE OLD SONG.

It is not the song of sirens,
Nor of war in the days of old;
It is not Æonian music
That deeply moves my soul.

Far beyond tradition,
In legendary lore,
The woof of song was fancy—
'Twas fancy, nothing more.

And down the time-worn alleys
These murmurs faintly fall;
They breathe of harps and viols,
With a dimness over all.

But when I see the teardrop
Hang in an aching eye,
When I know the sad heart
Is torn by many a sigh,

When a world of men are dying
For the want of home and rest,
And a world of weary women
Long for regions blest,

I'll sing an olden love song
And lend a helping hand;
My song will be of heaven,
The heart of music land.

THE GREENBRIER RIVER.

O GENTLE river, thou art here,
Dark flowing 'neath this ancient bridge,
And trembling 'gainst its stony walls,
And haunted by that towering ridge.

To the rusty ring on the maple tree
My boat chain is securely tied;
With every wavelet's heave and swell
In this light skiff I rock and ride.

Spring's voices and the flowers fair
Are stilled and folded for the eve;
The softening breeze and twilight hour
My phantasy and dreams do weave.

Thy source, O sparkling river, tell
The mystic fount from which thou art sprung;
I've traced thee up by islet strand,
Where wildest notes by birds were sung,

Where the water birches' ragged limbs
Were blending with the spicewood sweet,
Where winsome children in their play
Had come to splash with their dancing feet.

I've traced thee on by mill and town
To the dell where dawn is e'er behind,
Where shades of the dark rhododendron cling
To bind the spell of the mountain wind.

I've caught in the path of thine infant feet,
The trout flashing gold in thy waterfall;
I've tracked the deer in the dingle deep
To the grayest crags of thy cradle wall.

Thou art not all river, not all form;
Thou art not all shore and silver stream;
But half of thy life is law and wave,
And half of thy beauteous life is dream.

As a joyous dream in the long ago
Thou didst ever dwell in th' Eternal Mind,
And slept in His heart since the first stars shone
As a rare and radiant gem enshrined.

From starlight down to where fireflies shine
Thou comest on, thou beautiful stream,
With music and sparkling joy for all
Down the flowery shore and path of thy dream.

WHERE THE BLUE GRASS GROWS.

THERE'S a land with mountains towering,
Where the stormy clouds hang lowering,
But whose slopes in spring are flowering,
The land where the blue grass grows.

There the freshest airs commingle
Down to the valley's deepest dingle,
But there's warmth on hearth and shingle,
There where the blue grass grows.

There the gentlest words are spoken,
You receive the kindest token,
And the freest bread is broken,
There where the blue grass grows.

There the speckled trout are leaping,
There the pheasant shy is keeping,
And the deer in the fern a-sleeping
Anear where the blue grass grows.

When I'm old and growing older,
And every year my heart beats colder,
When it fails, O may it moulder
There where the blue grass grows!

YEARNING.

O THE dust of the land,
And the foam of the sea,
The glint and glare of the eye!
O the hungry soul,
And the aching heart,
And the yearning that will not die!

'Tis for Thee we seek
Through the light and shade
Of life's vast worldly sea.
O the brimming joy,
And the bounding heart,
When we come to our own in Thee!

MOUNTAIN LAKE.

Drink deep, O light-foot bay,
Of the waters without a stain;
For the summit I must reach
Before I slack thy rein.

Press on up the mountain side;
For the light fades in the west,
And I long for a glimpse of the lake
That I love on earth the best.

O star of the evening sky,
High o'er the lofty mount,
Brighten the beautiful lake
And shine on her crystal fount!

Let thy clear light fall
On the many-jeweled guitar,
Until its music ascends
To the home of the evening star.

Let thy white light spread
From the boat and the dripping oar
To where the song and wimpling waves
Break again on her rocky shore.

Here pining Echo strays
And passes the music on
From depths of the shadowed beach
To the mountains high and lone.

The rhododendrons know
And the fern rocks on the west,
These and the hemlocks know
Where lovers love the best.

There was never a lake so pure,
With nothing of earth to mar.
Ring on, O music sweet!
Shine on, O evening star!

NIGHTFALL.

The evening breeze is stirring
In the deep forests now;
'Tis nightfall on the river
And on the mountain's brow.

The sheep bells' sleepy tinkle
Tells that the day is done;
The clouds of the western ridges
Have gone to their sunset home.

And afar the kildee's shadow
Fades in the evening light;
The strings of my harp are silent,
And so, dear friend, good night.

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